

7.0 SERVICES AND FACILITIES *Note: This chapter is entirely rewritten*

This chapter addresses all local government and other public services and facilities related to public safety, education, community services and utilities. Some of the services that Tiverton residents enjoy are provided by the annual real estate tax. These include police, fire, schools, libraries and other community services. Others are paid by the recipient, as in public water service and sewers. All affect the public health, safety and welfare of Tiverton's citizens. The locations of municipal buildings are shown in Figure 7-1.

7.1 Public Safety

Police Department

Law enforcement and protection of persons and property is provided by the Police Department's 28 member enforcement team, supplemented by 12 civilian employees, including the animal control officer and harbormaster, with assistance from a number of part-time (primarily volunteer) harbor patrol officers, as well as state fish and game officers. The Police Department operates with roving patrols of typically three, occasionally four officers per shift. Average response time to an emergency dispatched call is approximately four minutes throughout town.

Police Department headquarters are located south of Route 24 at Fish Road, in a 30 year old wooden frame single story slab building that is in need of infrastructure upgrades and lacks adequate storage space for police records (which are kept in a non climate controlled metal storage unit behind the building). A previous grant enabled the department to upgrade its computer system, and in 2004, the communications system was centralized and enhanced to accommodate all emergency services -- police, fire and ambulance. In the future, the town should consider construction of a combination police/fire complex. The public safety complex should be centrally located in town on a parcel not less than seven acres to accommodate both departments' staff and parking needs.

The Police Department is committed to the concept of community policing and community involvement. It plans to continue its ongoing drug and alcohol education program in the schools, and to assist in neighborhood watch programs. Federal, state, and homeland security grants are actively sought, as is donated equipment.

Fire Department

As of 2006, the Fire Department operates its three fire stations with a staff of 32 full-time firefighters, plus the Fire Chief and a civilian secretary. The town no longer has the assistance of volunteer firefighters.

A physical analysis of the Fire Department's facilities was completed in 1990 by Keyes Associates, with a recommendation that the town continue to monitor its facilities needs

over time. The station buildings are in need of long term repair and maintenance, and many town residents and officials feel a new fire station is needed, preferably as part of a combined police and fire complex. An ideal location would allow for the consolidation of two fire stations while ensuring that industry accepted safe response times can be met. A new station should be of sufficient size to provide adequate office space for the entire organizational structure, and adequate room for front line and reserve apparatus. There is a desire for a ladder company or a specialized fire apparatus to access the condominiums in the Villages at Mount Hope Bay and the Sakonnet Bay Manor, as well as the numerous older two-story buildings in the north end of town; presently such equipment has to be requested from Fall River or Middletown.

The Fire Department also manages the emergency rescue service, which consists of two rescue vehicles. The dispatching system put into place for the Police and Fire Departments in 2004, as well as a state-wide 911 system which identifies the locations of 911 calls, have increased both departments' efficiency in responding to emergencies. The town currently bills for rescue service.

Emergency Management

Tiverton has a volunteer Emergency Management Director, appointed by the Town Administrator. One of the director's duties is to develop an emergency management plan as required by the Federal Emergency Management Act and in accordance with the Town Charter. The President of the Town Council is responsible for declaring emergencies and shall be the final authority for all emergency management decisions.

In 2005, the Town Council also adopted a hazardous mitigation plan to recommend actions and policies to minimize the economic and social impacts of natural hazards such as floods, hurricanes and severe weather (Strategy for Reducing the Risks from Natural Hazards in Tiverton, Rhode Island, 2005). Adoption of the plan increased the town's eligibility for federal hazardous mitigation grants.

7.2 Schools

Tiverton's School District covers the incorporated bounds of the town. There are three operating elementary schools, Pocasset, Fort Barton and Ranger, the Tiverton Middle School and the Tiverton High School. The School Department consists of 194 teachers and 45 non-certified support staff. Although it varies somewhat from year to year, the educational system accounts for about two-thirds of the Tiverton annual budget.

Enrollment and Capacity

Budgetary constraints led to the closing of Nonquit Elementary School in 2003, with those students assigned to Fort Barton and Ranger. The three remaining elementary schools have little further available capacity. The Middle School and the High School are also nearing full capacity. The information in Table 7-1 below provided by the

Superintendent's Office shows enrollment for the 2004-05 school year, and includes an estimate of percent utilization and additional capacity for each school.

TABLE 7-1
School Enrollment, Capacity and Percent Utilization, 2004-05

School	Enrollment (6/2/05)	Approx. Capacity	Percent Utilization	Potential Growth (# of students)
Pocasset	277	330	84 %	53
Fort Barton	206	240	86 %	34
Ranger	226	250	90 %	24
Middle School	698	850	82 %	152
High School	<u>745</u>	<u>825</u>	<u>90 %</u>	<u>80</u>
Total School System	2152	2495	86 %	343

Table 7-2 shows school enrollment during three different years separated by a decade each, as well as the 2004-05 enrollment figures. It indicates that over a long period of time enrollment has been relatively stable, although in recent years while overall enrollment is declining, the number of high school students is increasing. The School Superintendent reports that enrollments over the next several years are projected to grow slowly.

TABLE 7-2
Historical School Enrollment

	<u>K-4</u>	<u>5-8</u>	<u>9-12</u>	<u>Total</u>
1981-2	744	850	926	2,520
1991-2	811	646	578	2,035
2001-2	788	779	652	2,219
2004-05	709	698	745	2,152

Following the rejection of a bond issue in 2002 to combine the four elementary schools into a new building on a single site, the Tiverton School Committee commissioned a study of the town's elementary schools to determine the cost and advisability of rehabilitating the elementary schools, including Nonquit School in south Tiverton. The town's elementary schools were built between 1925 and 1952 and renovated in the 1950's and 1970's. They do not meet the current standards of the Rhode Island Department of Education, which require that there be 90 square feet of space for each student in the classroom and that provisions be made for special education classes, nor are they all handicapped accessible as required by the American Disabilities Act. In addition, classrooms once available for teaching have, of necessity, been assigned for computer use. The study estimated the cost of rehabilitating four elementary schools to

meet state standards at \$9 to \$10 million. The School Committee recommended instead to renovate and enlarge Fort Barton and Pocasset Schools, and to replace Ranger with a new elementary school on property north of the current high school. This required issuing a bond of approximately \$30.7 million, which was approved by the voters in the fall of 2004. Construction is expected to be completed by 2008.

In November 2002, the voters approved a \$3.75 million bond to improve the aging high school, built in 1966. Construction began in the spring of 2005, and should be completed in 2006. Improvements include expansion of the guidance area, upgrading of science labs and improvements to the soccer-football fields. The town is to be reimbursed by the State of Rhode Island for 30% of the total cost of each project.



Tiverton's High School is improving, both physically and academically.

Academic Services and Ratings

Tiverton provides special education services through a regional collaborative program also including students from Little Compton, Portsmouth and Middletown. This allows the town to contain costs associated with providing services to students with special needs. Federal funds, which offset a portion of these costs, are allocated on a per capita basis. When ready, students are integrated into the regular classrooms.

Currently, the emphasis in the Tiverton school system is on increasing academic excellence in instruction and learning. In 2001, after a rigorous examination, Tiverton schools received accreditation from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. In 2004, the Tiverton schools received strong ratings from the Rhode Island Department of Education, as follows:

TABLE 7-3
RI Department of Education Ratings, 2004-05

<u>School</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Pocasset	Moderately Performing and Improving
Fort Barton	High Performing and Sustaining
Ranger	High Performing and Sustaining
Tiverton Middle School	High Performing and Improving
Tiverton High School	High Performing and Improving

In 2005, Tiverton High School was recognized by the Rhode Island Board of Regents as a “Commended High School” for demonstrating significant improvements in student achievements in both English Language Arts and Math, one of only eight high schools to receive this award.

Finance and Administration

The School Committee, as vested by law, has the responsibility to determine expenditures for the school system. An annual budget is prepared, and a detailed review is undertaken by the town’s Budget Committee, before presentation at the Financial Town Meeting, held in May of each year. As required by the state, the School Committee supplies the Department of Education with a five-year capital budgeting plan. The School Department’s expenditures for the 2004-05 school year was \$9,956 per pupil, the eighth lowest of the 37 school districts in the state.

7.3 Library Services

Tiverton’s library services consist of the Essex Library on Highland Road and the Union Library, located in a historic building abutting the Tiverton Four Corners historic area. Union is owned by the Union Library Association, and is rented annually to the Tiverton Library Board.

Essex and Union together provide less than 5,000 square feet of library space to a community which has grown considerably. Due to fire regulations, Essex Library is currently restricted to serving no more than 30 patrons at one time, which requires that all library programs be held in outlying facilities. In accordance with state standards which take into account present and future needs of the community, a new library would require an area of approximately 32,000 square feet. This would include public meeting space, study rooms and staff work space and room to accommodate special collections.

Although the Essex Library is deeply loved as a historic building, its location on ledge outcropping precludes expansion. A new library would cost approximately \$7.5 million. The State of Rhode Island would reimburse the town for nearly half the cost. Failure to improve the library facilities will result in the loss of state funding (\$83,000 projected for fiscal year 2006-07), as well as membership in the CLAN (Cooperating Library Automated Network) system which permits inter-library loans within the state, and access to the state's databases.

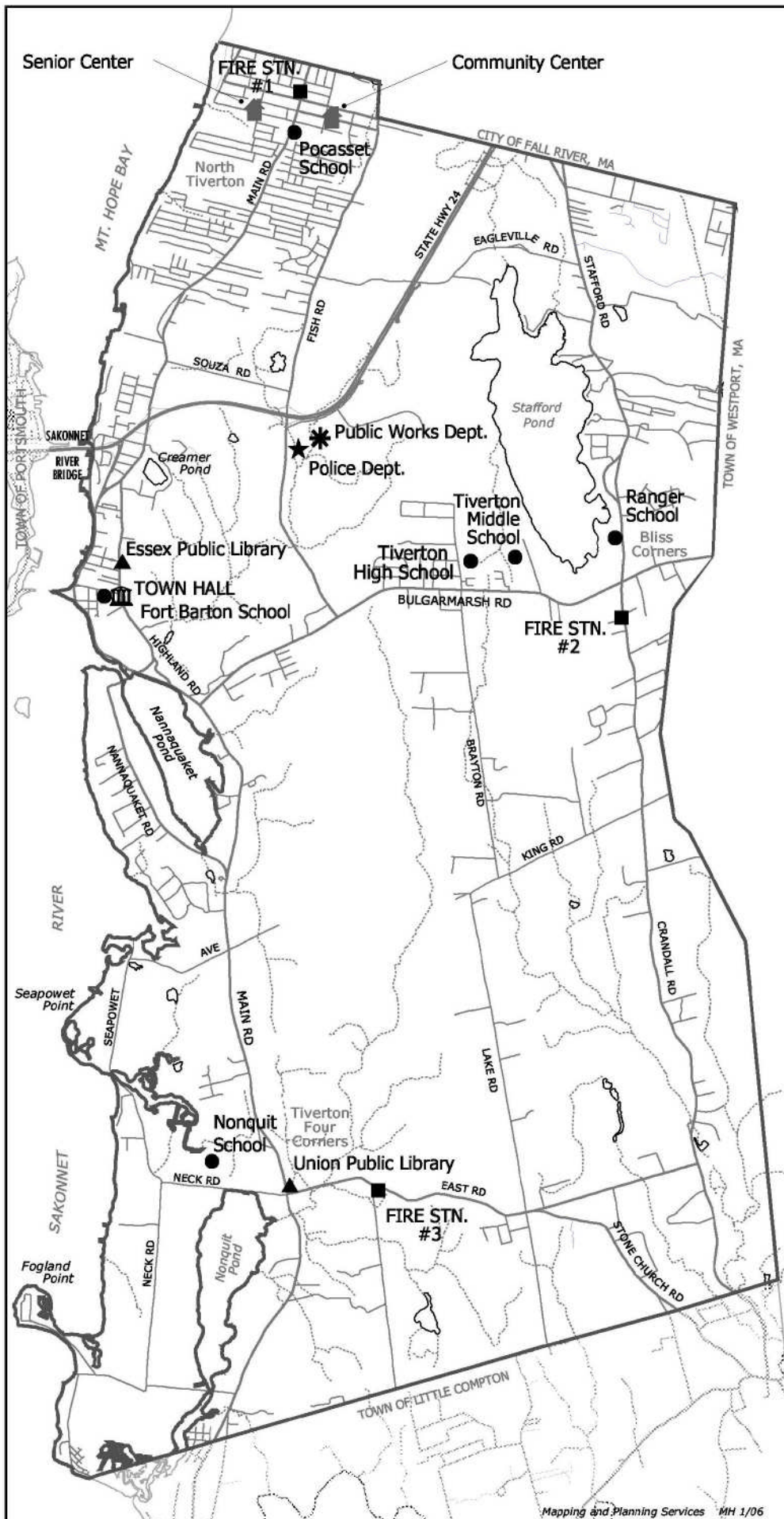


The Essex Library on Highland Road

7.4 Facilities for Public Use

The former Lincoln School located on Judson Street in north Tiverton serves as a community center. It serves the Recreation Commission, Harbor Commission and Wastewater Management Commission, and is used for other board meetings when the Town Hall is not available for meetings.

A senior citizens center is located on Canonicus Street in the former Barker School in north Tiverton. There is an active seniors program that includes recreation (card games, exercise classes, handicrafts groups), hot meals and senior club meetings. It is occasionally used for some public events. More programs would be added if space were available.



- TOWN HALL
- POLICE DEPT.
- FIRE STATION
- PUBLIC WORKS DEPT.
- PUBLIC SCHOOL
- LIBRARY
- COMMUNITY BUILDING

Source: RIGIS and Town of Tiverton

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The information depicted on this map is for general planning purposes only. It may not be adequate for legal boundary definition or regulatory interpretation.

TIVERTON COMPREHENSIVE
COMMUNITY PLAN



Figure 7-1 COMMUNITY FACILITIES

The Tiverton Town Hall is the center for town administration, including the offices of the Town Administrator, Tax Assessor, Tax Collector, Building Official, Town Treasurer, Planning Board and Town Clerk, as well as for town records storage. Although renovations in 1999 have made the Town Hall more useable, it still lacks office space, air conditioning, and climate control and fireproof storage for archival records. Many public meetings of the Town Council, Planning Board and Zoning Board of Review are crowded, often approaching the permissible occupancy of Town Hall.

In general, Tiverton lacks modern meeting space for community activities. The Amicable Congregational Church and other organizations are extremely generous in providing space for the meetings of such groups as Alcoholics Anonymous, the Community Chorus, the Tiverton Land Trust, the Boy and Girl Scouts, the Historical Society, League of Women Voters prior to town wide elections, and other groups which meet sporadically. Meeting rooms at a new library or town hall would provide alternative space.

7.5 Public Utilities

Water Service

Although all of south Tiverton and most sparsely populated areas in the north derive their water from wells, most homes and businesses in the more densely settled northeast portion of town are connected to public water. Two water systems serve the town, the Stone Bridge Fire District and the North Tiverton Fire District, both of which were originally established as volunteer fire fighting organizations. A third system, the Tiverton Water Authority, was acquired from the town by the North Tiverton Fire District in November 2002.

The Stone Bridge Fire District, which draws water from Stafford Pond, serves an L-shaped area extending from Stafford Pond west across Bulgarmarsh Road and north along Main Road to Souza Road. It maintains a storage capacity of 1 million gallons per day in two tanks, one with a capacity of 1 million gallons and the second with 0.5 million gallons. It serves approximately 1,070 households. Because the City of Fall River owns the water rights to Stafford Pond, Stone Bridge contracts with the city to purchase and pump water from the pond. The district also has an emergency interconnection with the Town of Portsmouth, which provides Aquidneck Island with emergency water or up to 175,000 gallons per day. Stone Bridge is proposing to either build a new state-of-the art pumping station or completely renovate the existing facility by 2009.

The North Tiverton Fire District also purchases water from the City of Fall River, drawing from North Watuppa Pond, and from the Stone Bridge Fire District for use of Stafford Pond water. Since acquiring the Tiverton Water Authority, North Tiverton Fire District has jurisdiction over the entire town, except for the area served by Stone Bridge. This district presently serves nearly 3,000 households, and would potentially serve new developments east of Stafford Pond and south of Bulgarmarsh Road. Where public water has not been extended, however, the availability of potable water is not known.

Both districts maintain their own distribution system. As required by the Rhode Island Water Resources Board, both districts update their management plans annually. Stafford Pond, and Nonquit Pond in south Tiverton, which is part of the City of Newport's water supply system and could someday provide drinking water to Tiverton residents, are both protected by means of a watershed protection overlay district (see Chapter 5).

As of 2005, the North Tiverton Fire District has completed or is undertaking a number of system improvements, which include: a new emergency pump station on Stafford Road, a 16 inch emergency interconnection along Fish Road to the existing 1 million gallon tank off Hambly Road, a new 2 million gallon storage tank, and rehabilitation of the existing pump station on State Avenue. With a cost slightly over \$3 million, the Water Resources Board and the U.S. Department of Agriculture will both contribute generously. Interim financing has been arranged with the Revolving Fund of the Rhode Island Department of Health. The expansion of water service by the North Tiverton Fire District in areas of the town other than the Stone Bridge service area is limited only by its ability to finance improvements.

Aside from upgrading the distribution and storage system, a continuing concern is the water quality of Stafford Pond. Residences along its eastern shore rely on cesspools or septic systems that eventually discharge into the pond through the groundwater or in cases of failure, through overland flow. Motor boats and seaplanes increase the risk of further contamination. In 2003 the Rhode Island Department of Health released a water assessment study of the Tiverton and Little Compton drinking water sources. The study suggested that further residential and industrial development would be expected to raise pollution threats in the Stafford Pond watershed from moderate to high levels. Although septic systems are the prime threat in this area, other non-point pollution hazards, such as fertilizers, exist.

Efforts have begun to address the maintenance and upgrading of septic systems in the watershed (see Wastewater Management below). Both the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and the federal Environmental Protection Agency have been active in providing funds to mitigate agricultural and stormwater run-off. The Tiverton Conservation Commission has also published a guide for landowners in the Stafford Pond watershed.

In addition, with funding provided by the Water Resources Board, the Stone Bridge Fire District has a program of acquiring land in the Stafford Pond watershed through direct purchase or by means of conservation easements. This program, which ensures high water quality for all users, will continue as funding allows. Stone Bridge has been awarded best tasting surface water in the State of Rhode Island twice in recent years.

Wastewater Management

Currently it is estimated that 94% of the homes and businesses in Tiverton rely on on-site sewage disposal systems, with an estimated 6,400 separate septic systems, half built before 1970, which implies outdated design concepts. The remaining homes and businesses are connected to a wastewater collections system operated by the town which

discharges to the City of Fall River sewage treatment facility. According to soil analyses, 80% of Tiverton's land area is problematic for septic systems; the soils are dense, slowly permeable, and have an underlying restrictive layer of "hardpan" and seasonal high water table.

South of Bulgarmarsh Road, almost all households maintain both individual wells and septic systems. Given the low housing density of the area, and land areas sufficient for adequate septic systems, even in areas of questionable drainage, sewerage expansion is not necessary. It is also unlikely that public drinking water service will be extended to this region.

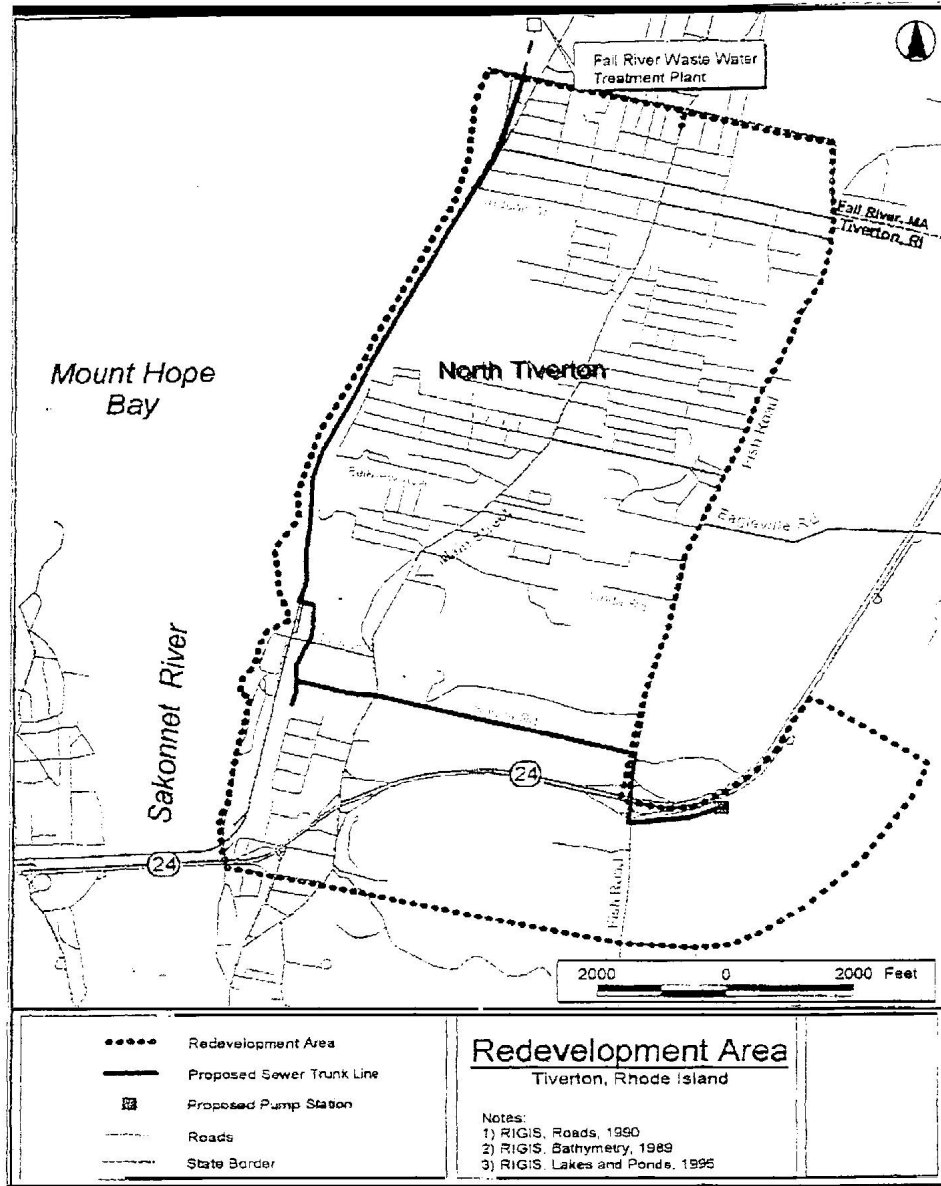
Although at the time of the original writing of the comprehensive plan there were a few sewer lines in north Tiverton connected to the sewerage system of Fall River, a number of significant connections have since been made. In 1997, the developers of Sakonnet Bay Manor, the residential facility for senior citizens, installed a 4 inch pressure line to the Fall River sewage treatment plant for its own use.

In 2000, in an agreement with the town, the developer of the Villages on Mount Hope Bay installed 2.6 miles of 12, 18 and 24 inch gravity interceptor sewer from Fall River along the state owned railroad right-of-way to the condominium development, and another 0.85 miles of force main sewer from the development to the industrial/technology park, on Industrial Way just south of Route 24 off of Fish Road. This sewer project, which also includes two pumping stations, opens up the northwest portion of town for sewer expansion and will allow extension into the industrial/technology park as needed. Financing for the project through the issuance of a tax incremental financing (TIF) bond followed the designation of the impacted area of north Tiverton as a redevelopment area. The Tiverton Redevelopment Area, shown in Figure 7-2, was identified as a blighted area also constrained by unsuitable soil conditions and inadequate utilities (amendment 00-1 to this comprehensive plan). The \$8.2 million debt is to be repaid from real estate taxes received from condominium owners at the Villages on Mount Hope Bay.

Other privately financed projects have also extended the sewer system within the town. The developer of Countryview Estates, the age restricted manufactured home community in the northeastern portion of town, installed sewers within that development, including a (third) station to pump the sewage to Fall River's Hancock Street sewer line. Other smaller extensions of the town sewer system include those that tie into the interceptor installed for the Villages on Mount Hope Bay, and those that tie directly into the Fall River system in the Stafford Road/Hancock Street area.

In addition, annual funding through the Community Development Block Grant program has provided for limited expansion of the sewers in north Tiverton in the areas of State Avenue and Shove Street. Such expansion is needed to address the many failed or failing septic systems in that area of town where homes were built on small lots and there is little land available for installing new septic systems and leach fields. Installation of sewers is part of the redevelopment of an area that qualifies for federal funding due to the high concentration of low and moderate income households, although the amount of funding provided on an annual basis (\$110,000) is relatively modest.

DRAFT FIGURE 7-2
TIVERTON REDEVELOPMENT AREA



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Sewer system extensions are presently first reviewed by the Wastewater Collections Superintendent, who recommends extensions to the Wastewater Management Commission, the Town Council appointed commission that deals generally with issues of sewers and sewage disposal. If approved by the commission, a proposed sewer extension request is submitted to the Town Council for their approval, following review and recommendation by the Planning Board.

In 2000, Tiverton received a \$35,000 grant from the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (RIDEM) to develop an on-site wastewater management plan to address the issue of aging and failing individual sewage disposal systems. The Tiverton Conservation Commission oversaw the development of the plan and a proposed on-site wastewater ordinance. The ordinance includes a six year phase-in period for the required inspection of septic systems, and a provision for the replacement of cesspools within one year of the transfer of the ownership of a house. The Tiverton On-site Wastewater Management Plan has been adopted by the Town Council and approved by the RIDEM. As a result town residents can partake in the Community Septic System Loan Program, which provides low-cost loans to residents for the repair or upgrade of their septic systems, administered through the RI Clean Water Finance Agency. The proposed ordinance focuses first on the inspection and maintenance of septic systems in the watershed of Stafford Pond.

The current facilities plan (commonly know as the Berger Report) which addresses the sewer needs of Tiverton, recommends that all areas south of Route 24, including the Stafford Pond area, be serviced by individual sewage disposal systems (ISDS's), because sewer expansion in these areas is economically unfeasible. Concern for the quality of Stafford Pond water has brought renewed attention to this critical resource. Since the Berger Report was issued in 2000, new technologies for both individual sewage disposal systems and sewer systems warrant an updated evaluation of the options for treating wastewater generated within the Stafford Pond watershed.



The protection of the water quality of Stafford Pond is a critical issue.

Stormwater Management

In Tiverton, swales and culverts have been the primary historical means for stormwater control. In areas which developed in more recent times through the subdivision process, systems with catch basins, connecting pipes and detention ponds contain and control stormwater run-off. New developments must meet the requirements of stringent land development regulations, and these are carefully monitored by the Public Works Director and Building Official. In general, best management practices for stormwater control are structural in nature, but the town also encourages use of innovative and advanced techniques that take advantage of natural conditions and topography.

North Tiverton's older developments have minimal drainage systems, many of which have been installed in a piecemeal manner. Most of the older systems discharge directly into receiving waters. Correcting or minimizing problems of basement flooding, septic system failure and the flooding and freezing of run-off onto town streets begins with an engineering analysis of existing conditions and potential area build-out. Based on this analysis, and availability of town funding, the selection of areas for corrective action can be done.

A Phase 2 Stormwater Management Plan has been approved by the Town Council and submitted to and reviewed by the RIDEM. The plan is to be implemented in phases according to an approved time schedule with full compliance by December 2008. A RIPDES (Rhode Island Pollution Discharge Elimination System) permit has been issued, permitting the town to drain certain stormwater into Narragansett Bay.

Public Works

The Public Works Department has a staff of 12. It is charged with maintaining the town owned roads including snow removal, street sweeping, roadside mowing, catch basin cleaning and sign maintenance, as well as the town landfill operation, and the repair and maintenance of town buildings other than those used by the School Department. Municipal solid waste collection is contracted out, though the Public Works Department collects certain large metal objects with its own equipment. There is currently no charge to residents for this service, although reservations are required.

Solid Waste Management

Solid waste generated by the town is disposed at the town landfill in south Tiverton, the only municipal landfill still operating in the state. It is located on 33 acres of a 125-acre parcel owned by the town. The remainder of the parcel serves as a wooded buffer area adjacent to the Town Farm Recreation Area. A mandatory recycling program has been implemented to extend the life of the landfill.

Operation of the landfill is governed by state regulations concerning fill methods, permitted types of refuse, impact controls (including leachate control) and projected life span. As required by the state, the town has retained an engineering consultant to update

its landfill management plan, and to provide quarterly monitoring of test wells surrounding the landfill. In 2005, the engineers estimated that the landfill will reach capacity in the year 2015, provided that advantage is taken of topographic conditions and permitting is obtained.

The cost to close the landfill is estimated at \$8 million. The town maintains a landfill closure account, a separate restricted account with interest earned added to the principal. As of 2005, the current balance in the account was approximately \$2.5 million. The town budget includes an annual payment of \$168,304 to cover the expense of the eventual closure of the landfill, although this amount may be increased to facilitate closing the deficit.

7.6 Town Administration

Tiverton has a town council/town administrator form of government consisting of seven council members and the Town Administrator. The Town Council President is the chief executive, while the Town Administrator manages the day-to-day affairs of the town. The budget is developed by an elected Budget Committee and is voted by the electors at the Financial Town Meeting in May each year. An elected Town Treasurer oversees the fiscal concerns of the town together with an appointed (part-time) Tax Collector.

Many town functions or community areas of interest, including planning, zoning, conservation, open space and trees, recreation, sewage disposal, cemeteries, the arts, and economic development, are managed by volunteer committees.

The Tiverton Town Charter was first written in 1994 and revised in 1999 and 2004. Charter review is done every five years by an elected Charter Review Commission. Any amendments proposed by the commission must be approved by the voters. The Town Council also has the authority to recommend revisions at any time with changes approved by the voters at a special election.

In the recent past, many factors have prevented the Town Council from concentrating on long term goals. In particular, the discovery of contaminated soils in north Tiverton in 2003 could not have been anticipated, but demanded many hours of Town Council attention as well as unanticipated costs. Property line disputes, and the access from “paper roads” have also been a source of continuing time-consuming Town Council discussion.

These issues point to the need to better handle relevant information on both a town-wide and individual property basis through Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping. The GIS computerized mapping can provide layers of data for the entire town or a specific area of town, including roads, water bodies, wetlands, watershed areas, soils, utilities, zoning districts, and the boundaries of individual parcels, which then can be linked to town data such as tax assessor information.

7.7 Public Information

Tiverton residents experience multiple sources of information. The town is “covered” by four newspapers, the Sakonnet Times (weekly), the Newport Daily News, the Providence Journal and the Fall River Herald News. Legal and public information notices are typically published in one or most of these papers. Videotapes of Town Council and other meetings of wide spread public interest are broadcast on a local cable network at regular intervals each week, although some sparsely populated areas of town are not covered by this local cable programming.

Tiverton has a website, which in 2005 developed into a comprehensive official website supported with town funding. Unlike the neighboring Towns of Westport and Little Compton, however, Tiverton does not publish an annual report, a listing of tax levies, nor a citizen’s guide to town services.

7.8 Services and Facilities Goals and Objectives

Goal

To provide community services and facilities which respond to the public safety, educational, governmental, infrastructure and informational needs of Tiverton’s residents in a timely, efficient and cost effective manner.

Objectives:

- Define specific community facility and infrastructure needs attainable within the constraints of available resources, and assure adequate capital planning congruent with meeting these needs.
- Evaluate and improve mechanisms for efficient delivery of public safety services, including police, fire, ambulance and emergency management.
- Maintain and improve an effective educational system and library service.
- Preserve, maintain and improve reliable sources of high quality, affordable drinking water.
- Plan for a comprehensive wastewater management strategy that encompasses limited sewer expansions where needed, along with the establishment of wastewater management districts to regulate on-site sewage disposal systems.
- Improve the management, operation and administration of town services and facilities, including town offices, equipment and town owned property.
- Provide more effective mechanisms of communication between citizens and town government.

7.9 Services and Facilities Policies

Long Term Capital Planning and Growth Management

Perhaps at no time in its history has the Town of Tiverton faced such difficult choices in terms of the need to plan for and finance the upgrading of its aging community facilities. The need for an integrated public safety complex has been widely expressed. The School Department is undertaking physical improvements to its elementary schools (including the construction of a new school) and to its high school at a total cost of \$34.5 million, with funds provided through the issuance of two local bonds, only 30% of which will be reimbursed by the state Department of Education. Unless the library system is provided with adequate facilities, state and private funding of those services will be withdrawn. Although there is support from the state and outside foundations, the net cost to the town for a new library is estimated at \$3.5 million.

In addition, as required by the state as part of local budgeting procedures, town departments, boards and commissions all make annual funding requests based on both operating and capital needs. The almost overwhelming need has been for equipment and other capital expenses. The infrastructure of the town is inadequate for the current population, much less the increase in population represented by development attracted by relatively low land prices and open land. Development pressures escalated in 2004 and 2005, with nearly 200 potential single family homes represented by ongoing applications before the Tiverton Planning Board. Currently, engineering and planning services, and other professional services as necessary, are provided on a contractual basis. Full-time employees in these positions would better serve the needs of the town (see Chapter 5).

Finally, although the town administration has been concerned with many short-term problems (town management personnel, hazardous soil conditions, property disputes and philosophical differences among Town Council members), the State of Rhode Island, through various statutes and policies, imposes numerous requirements and unfunded mandates on the town which add responsibilities and costs which must be borne by the citizens and taxpayers. In areas such as affordable housing, educational standards, fire and police manning requirements, emergency management, stormwater control and wastewater management, state requirements have imposed new regulations without regard to the cost to the town.

Policy 1: Develop and annually update the five year capital plan for both facilities and equipment for the various town departments and ancillary services, including public safety, schools, library, water, public sewage and landfill management, which might be realized through taxes, bond issuance and state and federal funding, within the town's financial capabilities.

To control residential growth, some towns in New England have imposed limits on the number of building permits issued each year so as to more efficiently plan for the municipal services needed to accommodate this growth (while allowing exemptions for

developments that provide affordable housing). Other communities have instituted an “impact fee” which provides funds for capital needs derived from the increased population. The Town of South Kingstown has adopted both a growth management ordinance and an impact fee. Although an impact fee cannot be used to address existing deficiencies in town infrastructure, it can be used to pay for that portion of new or expanded facilities, such as schools, libraries, roads and parks, that can be assigned to meeting the needs of the population resulting from additional residential development. As of 2006, the Town Council is evaluating the feasibility of and mechanism for establishing an impact fee.

Policy 2: Implement an impact fee ordinance and consider establishing an annual cap on building permits, to be imposed if needed.



Residential growth increases demand for municipal services.

Public Safety

The proposal for a combined police/fire facility to serve the public safety needs of Tiverton residents is prompted by the inadequacies and long term maintenance needs of the existing buildings, as well as by the efficiency of such a facility in meeting the future needs of a growing population. Tiverton should address this issue by preparing a study that evaluates building space and equipment needs, suitable locations and estimated costs to design and construct a public safety complex.

Policy 3: Undertake a study of combining the police department and the present fire stations into a public safety complex in a suitable location in town.

Schools, Library Services and Facilities for Public Use

Both the school system and the libraries are essential components of the town's intellectual and civic life. However, the School Committee's assessment of future population demands appears conservative, as the town faces the addition of many new dwelling units in future years due to new residential development. Demographic data suggests that transfers of property from older residents would also have an impact on the school population.

Policy 4: Encourage the School Committee to monitor Planning Board proceedings for “new home starts” and property transfers for school enrollment potential.

In the warrant for the Tiverton Town Financial Meeting, capital expenditures which might have been included as a part of the normal budget are designated as “special capital expenditures” such as gymnasium repairs and roofing. As required by the state, the School Department prepares a five-year capital plan. In addition, operating expenses may be reduced, or at least performed more efficiently, by combining facilities maintenance with the municipal side of town government.

Policy 5a: Encourage the School Committee to present an integrated, realistic and affordable annual budget, including the schedule of capital maintenance and replacement projects.

Policy 5b: The Tiverton School Committee and the Department of Public Works should investigate the possibility of combining necessary buildings and grounds maintenance for potential cost savings.

The need for a new library to accommodate a community of Tiverton's size and diversity, as well as to maintain its sources of outside funding, has been well established. A town committee has worked to articulate the need for a new library and to consider potential sites and options for the new town-wide facility. Whether this occurs at a “stand-alone” site or as part of a larger mixed use or municipal center development, the new library must be a priority for the town.

Policy 6: Support the establishment of a new library with adequate facilities for current and future use.

Community services are housed in obsolescent, inconvenient facilities. The “Town Hall Annex” as the Judson Street facility is sometimes referred to, is not generally considered “user friendly”. Similarly, the Senior Center lacks the space and facilities to meet the full demand of the services it provides. Both would require substantial capital improvements to meet the demands for modern meeting and activity space.

As the School Department develops and consolidates its facilities, buildings no longer used as schools can be converted to other community uses. For example, the old Nonquit

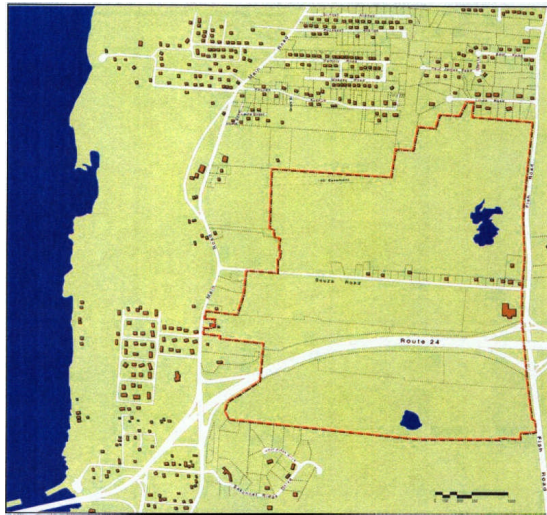
School is now used to house a Headstart Program. In general, all town owned buildings should be evaluated for alternative uses before being sold or otherwise disposed of. In particular, both south Tiverton and the Bliss Four Corners area are without public facilities for neighborhood and cultural activities.

Policy 7: Evaluate options for providing additional public meeting space in Tiverton, particularly for seniors and youth groups, and consider the best alternative use of all inactive school and other town buildings.

Development of a Municipal Center

A town center planning study undertaken in 2004 promoted the concept of a mixed-use village center as a way to provide retail services, affordable housing and a central location for municipal buildings (see Chapter 10). Many of the long-term facilities needs of the town could be included in such a village or municipal center. Facilities such as a public safety building, a library, a new town hall and/or community center would provide the public component and contribute to the daily activity necessary to make such a concept work.

Policy 8: Consider options for the development of a modern municipal center, including the public safety complex, library, town governance and public meeting space.



The study area for a new Tiverton Town Center.

Water Services

Water management plans for each of the two water supply districts, Stone Bridge and North Tiverton, are required by the state, and each has prepared a plan. These plans are required to be consistent with the Comprehensive Community Plan. However, a plan addressing water supply for the entire municipality has yet to be developed.

Policy 9a: Encourage the Stone Bridge and North Tiverton Fire Districts to present a single, town wide management plan, and require them to work in conjunction with the Planning Board in determining a measured expansion of public water so as to moderate development pressure in the town.

Policy 9b: Consider the merger of the Stone Bridge and North Tiverton Fire Districts into a single water district serving the entire town.

Wastewater Management

Currently the large majority of homes and businesses in Tiverton rely upon individual sewerage disposal systems (ISDS), which, when properly designed, installed and maintained, are effective and efficient for wastewater treatment. In sparsely developed areas, on-site systems are more cost effective than sewers. Keeping most areas of Tiverton unsewered will also help protect the rural character of the town by limiting development potential. However, many existing individual systems are quite old and are substandard due to the technology used and/or operate with physical limitations due to the presence of ledge, high ground water or soils of low permeability. The On-Site Wastewater Management Plan, completed in 2004, and the On-Site Wastewater Management Ordinance, under consideration in 2006, are the first steps toward addressing the issue of substandard or improperly maintained septic systems, particularly in the watershed of Stafford Pond, the town's major public drinking water supply. The ordinance will provide for the orderly inspection and maintenance of existing ISDS and the replacement of failing systems.

Policy 10 Implement the On-Site Wastewater Management Ordinance on a town-wide basis so as to protect ground and surface water at a reasonable cost to property owners.

The Wastewater Management Commission, which participated in the development of the On-Site Wastewater Management Plan and Ordinance, will take on more responsibility with the implementation of the requirements of the ordinance. As described in the 2004 version of the Town Charter, the commission (formerly the Sewer Commission) shall administer that portion of the Town Code entitled "Sewers and Sewage Disposal". However, with the growth of Tiverton and the complexities of managing both sewer expansion, which involves contractual interaction with the City of Fall River, and the implementation of the wastewater management plan, the town would be best served by the transfer of the regulatory duties of the volunteer commission to a town department. The commission would then serve in an advisory capacity to the appropriate town staff.

Policy 11: Amend the Town Charter to transfer the regulatory power of the Wastewater Management Commission to the Department of Public Works, and provide for a regular, perhaps part time, employee to oversee septic system requirements.

In late 2004 the Town Council placed a restriction on the extension and “hookup” of sewers without the council’s explicit approval. Tiverton’s contract with the City of Fall River limits the total flow from the town into the city’s treatment system to a maximum of 2 million gallons per day. Priority for sewer expansion is to be given to those areas in the north end characterized by failing septic systems. Additional expansion should be allowed only following an analysis of sewer capacity and an understanding of the likely impact of such expansion on development potential and town character.

Policy 12 Include in the Sewers and Sewage Disposal Ordinance sufficient controls on sewer expansion so that residential growth is managed in accordance with the Tiverton Comprehensive Community Plan, and priority is given to those areas where on-site disposal is inadequate or failing, while ensuring that the total maximum flow capacity is not exceeded.

Much of the disquiet with which the sewer expansion proposals have been viewed has been the lack of substantiation for cost incurred by both the town and property owners. A complete financial plan, showing costs and financing requirements is needed.

Policy 13: Require that any sewer expansion be supported by a complete financial plan, including costs and expenses, methods of financing improvements, and betterment assessments and user fees chargeable to individual property owners.

A detailed Wastewater Facilities Plan for Tiverton was conducted by Camp Dresser & McKee Engineers and approved by the EPA in October 1976. In January 2000, the Berger Group completed a Facilities Plan Update, which was approved by the RI Department of Environmental Management. This document is the guideline currently used by the town for treating all wastewater generated within the town. Now that the town will be implementing the On Site Wastewater Ordinance and beginning the build-out of the planned sewer system, this document needs to be updated. Furthermore, if the town intends to utilize financing alternatives that are currently available from the state, the Department of Environmental Management requires that the document be updated.

A facilities plan update will identify those areas in town that require sewers and those areas that can be serviced by individual sewage disposal systems. It could also incorporate additional studies, such as an engineering study to determine appropriate on-site treatment systems in the Stafford Pond Watershed, in the overall planning of wastewater treatment within the town.

Policy 14 Provide funding to enable the town’s existing Wastewater Facilities Plan to be updated and an engineering study of the Stafford Pond watershed to be conducted.

Town Administration

Adoption of a GIS mapping system would provide a valuable planning tool and bring Tiverton up-to-date in terms of current technology for managing and presenting data on the town's physical characteristics, infrastructure and regulatory mechanisms.

Policy 15 **Provide funding to establish and implement town-wide GIS mapping system to serve the town's planning, administrative and public service needs.**

Public Information

It is difficult to assess whether more information would increase citizen interest in town affairs. Certainly specific issues are known to "pack" Town Hall during Town Council meetings and workshops. Particular neighborhood concerns have resulted in increased attendance. With the establishment of an official website, citizens now have a central source of information (other than the crowded Town Hall bulletin board) regarding Town Council and committee meetings, and other meetings of public interest. However, the town could still be served by an annual publication of community interest, as well as the expansion of televised town meetings.

Policy 16: **In addition to the town website, consider providing other forms of information dissemination, such as an annual citizens guide to town services and regulations, and the additional videotaping and televising of town meetings.**



Tiverton's historic town hall serves as a municipal center.